



CORY FAMILY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Understanding Some Naming Conventions

by Earl Cory, Webmaster, adapted from several online sources



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Knowing how surnames came about helps you follow the right clues as you go back in time.

The Roman Empire enforced a multiple-name system: first the given name, second the name of the family association that existed within the empire, and finally the nickname, which with time became the surname. Julius Caesar brought this naming code with him when he conquered Gaul, which encompassed the territory of current France and surrounding countries. Over the centuries, however, this Roman naming convention died away – and by the 10th century, most people only had one name – their “given” name.

Increased population, trading, and travel rendered the single-name model impractical and obsolete. Striking up a deal with five people named “Jean” – with no way of differentiating them – didn’t bode well for business. In the mid-11th Century AD, last names began emerging throughout Europe as a way to help differentiate between people with the same first name. ⇒

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In France, King Louis XI in 1474 banned this liberty of people being free to add any last name they wanted, forcing all name changes to be vetted by royal decree. In 1539, King Francois was the next ruler to make big changes in French naming law, when he enlisted the services of the Church to record the population's civil status, including their names, thereby creating records that are a boon to modern-day family historians.

Old last names can be divided into categories that reflect these different moments in history. Although from different origins, common last names can have religious, ethnic, or linguistic roots. For example, popular French last names take after Christian saints, but you'll find plenty of ancient Hebraic origin as well. Latin names testify to the Romans ruling Gaul, before the country later got its name, Francia, Kingdom of the Franks. Other names come from neighboring regions that were disputed and subsumed as late as the 20th century, like the Germanic ones of Alsace and Lorraine.

Most surnames can be categorized into five different groups based on their origin, with the fifth being the most challenging:

OCCUPATIONAL: These are some of the oldest traceable ones and denote the trade of a past ancestor. For example, someone in old French records with the last name **Berger** (from Latin *bergex*, ram) most likely had a shepherd in their family once upon a time! Other examples are: **Fletcher**, from Old English *fulcher* or Old French *flechier*, both referring to a maker of arrows; **Smith** from *smitan* which meant to strike with a hammer; or **Skinner**, from the Norse-Viking *skinn*, meaning hide or pelt.

GEOGRAPHICAL: These names relate to the specific regions where a person once descended from; for example, the last name **Comtois** shows that the family once hailed from Franche-Comte in eastern France. These names can also relate to specific features, such as the name **Beaumont** (meaning beautiful mountain or hill). Our friend **Berger**, seen above, if found in German/Swedish records could have had ancestors from an area near a *berg* (a hill or mountain).

Our **Cory** name may be an example of a locational name from the Gaelic *coire* (a hollow) meaning dweller in or near a hollow. Alternatively, it is from the Gaelic *corra* (a spear), or possibly the Old Norse personal name *kori*, with the variations **Cori**, **Corie**, **Correy**, **Corry**, **Korey**, **Kory**, etc.

DESCRIPTIVE: These names were often based on a quality of character or physical appearance; for example, **Leblanc** meaning "the blonde one," or **Brun** meaning "darker complexion."

Sometimes the prefix *du* or *de* meaning "of" is attached. For example, **Dubois** means "of the forest." In German, "of" or "from" is *Von*." For Wernher **von Braun**, whose full name was Wernher Magnus Maximilian Freiherr von Braun, might refer either the "brown" or "suntanned" or to family origins in the German city of Braunschweig in Lower Saxony.

Last, but not least, a Norman reference to someone with strong arms (*fortenbras*) could have lead to Neal **Armstrong's** name, common in Scotland.

MATRONYMIC/PATRONYMIC: Many common last names are based on the mother's or father's given name. A common prefix to denote this is "de/du" and is used to say son of; however, sometimes it is left out altogether. For example, Jacques **de Robert** could also be written as Jacques **Robert**.

The Normans, a once distinct people found in the north of France used the prefix *fitz*, meaning son of, so Jacques **FitzRobert** would denote Jack (or Jacob) son of Robert (from Normandy). The name of Henry VIII's son and only acknowledged illegitimate child was Henry **Fitzroy** (Henry, son of the King). *Fitz*, *Mc*, and *Mac* are similarly seen in Scotland, while in Ireland, *Mc* and *O'* are used.

In Scandinavian countries, your last name was that of your father or your mother. For example: **Anderson** means "the son of Ander" while **Anisdotter** means "the daughter of Anis."

DIT NAMES – A PARTICULAR CHALLENGE: If you've ever done genealogical research in Quebec, chances are that you've encountered "dit names." A dit name is essentially an alternate name, tacked on to a family name or surname. Therefore, the first name is the family's original surname, passed down to them by an ancestor, while the "dit" name (pronounced "dee" and from the French verb *dire*, to say) is the name the person/family is actually known as or "called".

Dit names are perhaps the least common types of names and are found primarily in New France (French-Canada, Louisiana, etc.), the northern part of France, and sometimes Scotland. The use of dit names slowed dramatically during the mid- to late-1800s, although they could still be found used by some families into the early twentieth century

The dit name poses challenges for genealogists confronted with different surnames in different documents, particularly if they are not familiar with the custom. These abound in the nominative history of ancient Quebec. "Dit names" can help you as well as hinder your genealogical research, hence the importance of being familiar with the concept.

Reasons for Dit Names. There were several reasons why dit names came about.

(1) Dit names were used to differentiate amongst branches of a family that remained in a certain area for a long time.

(2) Another use of dit names was for the same reasons as the original surname

OCCUPATIONAL, for example: **Chartier** (user or maker of carts), **Meunier** (miller), **Vanier** (separates straw from grain). A person who worked as a blacksmith might receive the name **Lefebvre** (iron-worker or smith).

GEOGRAPHICAL, for example Andre Jarret **de Beauregard**, where Beauregard refers to the ancestral home in the French province of Dauphine;

Gustave **Eiffel**, architect of the Eiffel Tower, born in France in 1852 as Alexandre Gustave Bonickhausen **dit Eiffel**, a descendant of Jean-René Bönickhausen, who emigrated to France from Germany in the early 18th century. The dit name Eiffel had been adopted by descendants of Jean-René for the Eifel mountain region of Germany from which he had come. Alexandre Gustave formally changed his name to the form we recognize – Gustave **Eiffel** in 1880.

Other geographical names could be **St-Onge** (from [Santones](#), an ancient [Gallic](#) tribe) or **LeBreton** (from Bretagne or Brittany).

DESCRIPTIVE: for example: **Leblond** (blond or fair); **Leblanc** (with prematurely white hair or pale complexion); **Leroux** (red-haired); **Petit** (a small person or the younger of two with the same name). Sometimes, the name could be ironic, such as calling a large person **Petit**.

MATRONYMIC/PATRONYMIC: based on the mother's or father's name.

(3) A dit name could also be a *nomme de guerre* (meaning war name) particularly in 15th to 18th century France, an identifying alternate name (before the use of ID Numbers) required by military law during times of military conscription, usually related to a the soldier's place of origin (*dit Champigny*) or a personal or physical trait (*pret a boire*, ready to drink). These "war names" often came to the new world with the soldier and in time became their surname.

How You Might See Dit Names Recorded. A dit name can be legally used to replace the family's original surname. A dit name does not always include the "dit." Sometimes the two surnames may be linked as one family name, or you may find families who use the two surnames interchangeably. Thus, you may find an individual's name recorded with a dit name, or under either just the original surname or just the dit name. Dit names may also be found reversed with the original surname, or as hyphenated surnames. For example the name Hudon dit Beaulieu could become: Hudon-Beaulieu, Hudon Beaulieu, Beaulieu-Hudon, Beaulieu Hudon, or simply either Hudon or Beaulieu.

How to Record a Dit Name in Your Family Tree. When recording a dit name in your family tree, it is generally standard practice to record it in its most common form - e.g. Hudon dit Beaulieu.

- A standardized list of dit names with their common variants can be found in Rene Jette's **Répertoire des Noms de Famille du Québec" des Origines à 1825** and Msgr Cyprien Tanguay's *Dictionnaire genealogique des familles canadiennes (Volume 7)*.
- Another extensive source is *The dit Name: French Canadian Surnames, Aliases, Adulterations, and Anglicizations* by Robert J. Quentin.
- The American French Genealogical Society also has an extensive online list of French-Canadian surnames, including variants, dit names, and Anglicizations.

When the name is not found in one of the above sources, you can use a phone book (Québec City or Montréal) to find the most common form or, even better, just record it in the form most often used by your ancestors.

It's a challenge to trace dit name ancestors, but as with all ancestor names, researchers need to proceed methodically and carefully. Be sure you keep all possible name variations such as dit names in mind, as well as what you already look for in accidental name changes, deliberate name changes, spelling variations, and phonetic misinterpretations. ★★★

Why waste your money looking up your family tree? Just go into politics and your opponents will do it for you. — Mark Twain

THE COREY BARN IN SOUTHOLD, NEW YORK

by Chris Koehler, Newsletter Editor

Recently CFS President John Corey sent the following Corey snippet from the website of the Southold Historical Society.

COLLECTIONS CORNER



This is a photo of the Albertson livery in Southold with Corey Albertson, Harry Howell, and Clinton Carrole holding two horses in front of the barn. Writing on the back of the photo identifies the barn as the Corey Barn (now gone). The barn originally stood on the east side of Youngs Avenue at the intersection of Youngs Avenue and Travelers Street.

<https://www.southoldhistoricalsociety.org/collections-corner>

Curious, I set out to find an Albertson-Corey connection.

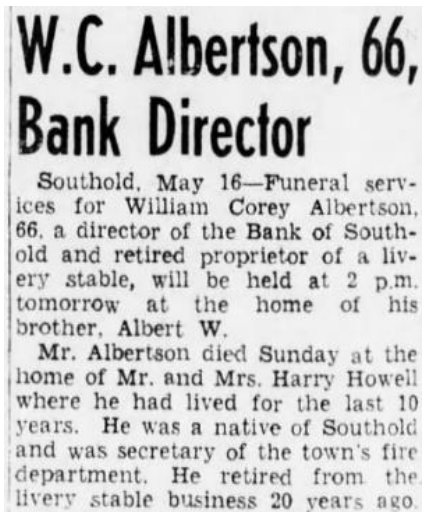
William Corey Albertson (1878-1944) was born in Southold to William Conklin Albertson and Jennie M. Wells Albertson. It appears that for much of his life he went by Corey informally.

Corey had two younger brothers, Storrs Lester Albertson, born 1879, and Albert Wells Albertson, born 1882. Jennie Wells Albertson died in 1897 and William Conklin Albertson died in 1899.

Corey left Southold the year his father died, but only long enough to attend Syracuse University for at least a couple of years.

In the 1910 Federal Census, Corey is back in Southold, living in a boarding house and owner of the livery. It looks like he never married and remained in Southold the rest of his life, apart from a World War I stint in the Quartermaster Corps in Brookhaven, NY, less than 50 miles away.

William Corey Albertson's obituary appeared in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle on May 16, 1944.



This was a short search on Ancestry.com, Newspapers.com, and GenealogyBank.com. As I was looking, I built "Corey Albertson Tree (accurate?)" on Ancestry and made it public.

I found a Youngs in Jennie Wells Albertson's family line, both Youngs and Wells being among our John Corey's fellow early settlers.

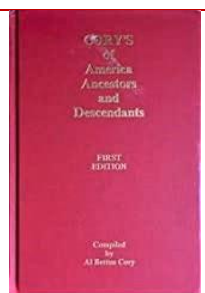
I also found that Albertson has been in Southold for more than 200 years. I have shopped at the Albertson farm stand on family visits in nearby Cutchogue. Albertson Marine is on the way there.

These families are bound to have known each other even if not being directly related. For me, it's one of those family tree unsolved mysteries. ★★★

REVISITING A RESOURCE

Cory's (sic) of America Ancestors and Descendants

compiled by
Al Bertus Cory, 1991



UPDATING DR. WILLIAM CORY (1814-1879) by Earl Cory, with Catlin Black

When I began the Ancestry.com Cory database, Al Cory (1923-2018) graciously provided the GEDcom that he compiled in his momentous work on the Corys. In 1999, I uploaded from it the following information about Dr. William Cory.

Dr. William Cory was born 10 Jun 1814 and died 2 Jul 1879. He is buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Sioux Falls, Minnehaha, South Dakota. He married Martha Ann Holt on 7 Nov 1838 in Cooperstown, Otsego, New York.

Dr. William Cory is currently in the William of Portsmouth (Bristol) Cory database as taken from Al's research. Over the years, we have sorted out many of the errors in Al's work, but there are still many more to go. This is one example.

The following comments were posted on WikiTree <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Cory-1093> on May 31, 2020 by Catlin Black, with her sources listed.

The following is a research note. Many years ago I posted a tree on rootsweb.com. In it I used information I obtained from The Cory/Corey Family Society regarding the parents of William A. Cory. In retrospect I was hasty in simply accepting the names that were given. I have since had reason to question the information. The society gave me the names of Abner Cory and Mary Gray as parents. Following my posting of the tree I was contacted by Jan Fitch (a descendant of

Harriet (Cory) Rork, dau. of this William and Martha) who was also researching the family. She sent me copies of letters which pointed out the problems with considering Abner the father of William. That and some of my own research led to the following thoughts:

- Abner doesn't have a boy under 10, William's age range, in his household in the 1820 census.
- Abner is listed with 3 males in 1830: 1 age 10-15, 1 age 20-30, 1- age 40-50. None age 15-20, William's age range. I believe the two younger males may have been Abner's younger brother and a nephew, based on correspondence with Jan.
- Dr. William A. Cory said on census reports that he was born in New York, but Abner, Dr. William's alleged father, doesn't settle in the area of Middlebury, NY until about 1817, and there is no evidence that he lived elsewhere in New York at the time of William's birth. I found evidence of the 1817 date in a book about Wyoming County entitled The History of Wyoming County, ... in the paragraph on Frank Capwell (Abner's son-in-law), page 224 [can be found on archive.org].
- Jan Fitch gave me information that Abner was still in the Rhode Island militia in 1815.
- Mary Gray was born about 1797 which would have meant she would have been married by about age 16 in order to have child by age 17. New England women usually married after age twenty.
- William A, Cory is first found living in Elmira, New York which isn't near Middlebury where Abner lives.
- There is one remote connection found. Jan Fitch sent me a copy of a quit claim for the transfer of property in Elmira that was transacted in 1849 with two of Abner's brothers who were from Cooperstown. Cooperstown is where William married Martha. So he may indeed have had some connection to Abner's relatives, but what? DNA tests between proven descendants of Abner's and those of William's might be able to resolve the issue.

Now, on the subject of William being a doctor. In the census reports from 1850 until 1870, he is first a farmer, then a minister, then a dry goods merchant. So when did he become a doctor? It wasn't unusual for people of that time to receive an informal education through an apprenticeship or some other means. I suspect this is what happened with William A. One of his children is named McGee Caldwell, and I looked at that to see if I could find an ancestral connection. I didn't, but I did find that there was a McGee Caldwell who trained at Geneva College of Medicine [now Syracuse]. He was just a few years younger than William. William named his child in 1846 and Dr. Caldwell became a doctor in the 1840's. Either they knew each other as young men who lived in the same county, or they met after McGee become a doctor and formed a friendship and maybe apprenticeship. It is also possible they were related through William's unknown maternal line. In any case, it seems William only became known as Doctor after he arrived in Sioux Falls.
End Catlin

Catlin has sent me copies of the letters from Jan Finch and Charlotte Mueller. If anyone wants a copy, let me know, webmaster@coryfamsoc.com, and I will forward them to you.

The connection to Abner Cory and Mary Gray is based on information in Volume 2 of Al Cory's book. The late Charlotte Mueller, longtime CFS genealogist, in her letter to Jan Finch, agrees that there are problems with this connection. Unfortunately, the software package that Al used, did not supply references. It simply listed them as "Source xx", which is of little value. Al, when he supplied his copy of the databases he used to create the books, did not supply a list of the references, which

make it hard, at times, to know how Al arrived at certain connections. I have indicated to Catlin Black that I will make Ancestry.com corrections as soon as possible.

SEEKING DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM COREY2 (d. 1702) by David A. Cory

In his will dated 1 February 1684/5, John Cory1 of Southold, Long Island named four sons—John2 (d. 1685 or 1685/6), Jacob2 (d. 1705/6), Abraham2 (d. 1702), and Isaac2 (d. 1701/2). Birth years for these sons have been subject to speculation, but they are unproven.

Y-DNA is passed essentially unchanged from fathers to sons. John1 passed his Y-DNA to his four sons, and that Y-DNA has been passed with minimal change to their sons and subsequent generations of Corey/Cory males to the present day.

So far, descendants of John2 and Isaac2 have done the highest available level of Y-DNA testing, Y-700, at Family Tree DNA. We anticipate that a probable descendant of Jacob2 will be upgrading his test to Y-700 in the near future. That leaves descendants of Abraham2 unrepresented.

The Y-DNA of an Abraham2 descendant would be a valuable addition to the database. I am appealing to anyone reading the newsletter who is a descendant of Abraham2 to contact me at davecorey2@gmail.com. Even though females cannot take the Y-DNA test, they may know of a close male relative (father, brother, uncle, or cousin) who bears the surname and can test.

I would also point out that errors in Al B. Cory's database and other sources may create confusion about lines of descent from Abraham2 and Jacob2. Al's database shows John Cory3 (1686-1754) as a son of Jacob2, but the evidence shows he is almost certainly a son of Abraham2. If in doubt about whether you are descended from Jacob2 or Abraham2, please contact me and I'll try to help you work through your family tree.

I have searched Ancestry.com and have encountered several dead ends among Abraham2's descendants. One Corey line that shows some promise is John1, Abraham2, John3, Abijah4, Abijah5, John Orrin6, William Horace7, Charles Glover8, Roscoe C9, Roscoe C10. Roscoe C Corey10 had a male offspring born in 1959, but I have not been able to find contact information for him. If you have a connection to this line, please contact me. ★★

Editor's Note: *Cory's (sic) of America, Ancestors and Descendants*, 2 volumes (First Edition 1991, Second Edition 1994) is listed at 55 libraries across the country at worldcat.org. It can be borrowed or searched at archive.org. One copy is listed for sale at ABE Books (abebooks.com) for \$50 by the Genealogical Forum of Oregon.





In Memoriam
Dr. Lester W. Cory
1939-2020

Dr. Lester W. Cory, passed away on April 24, 2020, in the loving care of his family. He was born in Tiverton, Rhode Island on July 25, 1939, the youngest of three sons of Harold R. and Margaret G. Cory. He is married to the former Patricia Barrett. They have five children: Stephen Cory, Dyan Vaughan (John), Michael Cory, Melynda Viera (Richard Giguere), and Ann Vassiliadis (John); seven grandchildren: Jereme Beller, Cara Massey, Angela Viera, Samuel Chetwynd, Jacob Chetwynd, Emma Cory and Rachel Chetwynd; one great-grandchild, and many nieces and nephews.

Les graduated from Bradford Durfee College of Technology (now UMass Dartmouth) in 1963 with a degree in electrical engineering. He earned advanced degrees in engineering, science, and education from Northeastern University, URI (honorary D.Sci) and Bridgewater University. He is an honor graduate of the U.S. Air Force War College. Les served in the Rhode Island Air National Guard from 1957 to 1991 retiring with the rank of colonel. As commander of the 143rd Communications Flight and later of the 281st Combat Communications Group, his military awards include the U.S. Air Force Legion of Merit, the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal, and the Rhode Island Star.

Les was an accomplished professor of electrical and computer engineering at UMass Dartmouth from 1963 until retirement as Chancellor Professor Emeritus in 2008. He helped found and served as longtime volunteer Director of the SHARE Foundation; helping nearly 4,000 non-verbal individuals with disabilities to communicate. For this work, Les was honored by Ronald Reagan in 1985 with the President's Volunteer Action Award. In 1995 he was awarded a Jefferson Award and the National Jefferson Awards Committee included him as one of the 25 "Best of the Best" in the nation. Other awards and recognition included the UMASS Dartmouth Teacher of the Year Award (1985), President's Award for Public Service Award (2000), and UMass Dartmouth Chancellor's Medal for public Service (2014); the Fall River Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Community Service Award (1995); the Knights of Columbus Humanitarian Service Award (1991), and many others.

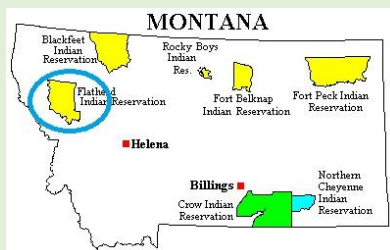
Les was also President of the Durfee Bells Preservation Society, a pilot, radio operator, choir member, and friend and mentor to many. Among his greatest achievements are the love and admiration of his family, friends, colleagues and the countless people whose lives were improved through his caring work and example.

Services were held privately with the Hathaway Home for Funerals, Fall River, MA. A memorial service will be announced in the future as gathering restrictions lift. Donations can be made to SHARE Foundation, 128 Union St., STE. LL3#6 New Bedford, MA 02740. To leave a condolence or view a memorial video, go to www.hathawayfunerals.com. To send flowers to the family or plant a tree his memory, visit the [floral store](#).

2021

CORY FAMILY SOCIETY REUNION

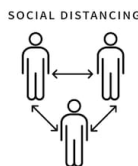
September 16-19, Thursday through Sunday
Flathead Indian Reservation, Pablo, Montana



Note venue change. Secretary Carolyn Corey is our local coordinator. See upcoming newsletters for details. Contact Earl Cory with any comments or ideas at webmaster@coryfamsoc.com.

FROM THE EDITOR

- The new front page works better with my lack of desktop publishing skills. Apologies and thank you to former editor Luke Davidson, whose design of the previous version of the newsletter I just could not master!
- The final newsletter of the year is the Fall 2020 issue, October publishing goal. Please let us know of any articles, ideas, or suggestions at newslettereditor@coryfamsoc.com or any Board member.



The Cory Family Society Newsletter



BOARD MEMBERS

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

Formed over 30 years ago, the Cory Family Society welcomes anyone interested in Cory, Corey, Corry, Corrie, etc. genealogy. Our goal is to celebrate our family ties, honor our ancestors, and leave knowledge for those who come after us. For more information, see www.coryfamsoc.com and <https://www.facebook.com/CoryFamSoc/>.

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